

HEALTH

Using Healthcare Information to Help Make Treatment Decisions

Good Information is Essential for Good Decisions

It may have taken you only a visit or two to your doctor or healthcare provider to find out what's causing your health problem. Now that you have a diagnosis it's time to make some decisions about your treatment.

For many conditions, there is no one "right" treatment. You may have several options, each with its consequences and benefits. Some of your options may have been proven by health care research to be effective, while others may not. In the future, your doctor or healthcare provider may be able to tap into a nationwide database containing the results of treatments for thousands of people like you with your condition. This would help you and your doctor make a good decision about the treatment that would be right for you.

Initial efforts to develop this national database are under way, but until that database is available, there are still things you can do to make sure you get the best health care possible. Finding out more about your condition is a good place to start. Contacting support groups with your condition, visiting your local library, contacting medical schools with a research department and searching on the internet can help you make the best decision concerning your treatment options.

Visit the web site www.consumer.gov/qualityhealth sponsored by the Federal Government's Quality Interagency Coordination Task Force. This site explains what quality health care is, why it matters and how you can get it.

STATE HEALTH PLAN PREVENTION PARTNERS
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